AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:

a mask protective device including a transparent portion that is transparent to a photolithography radiation;

a patterned mask including a pattern defined at least in part by an opaque portion that is opaque to the photolithography radiation;

a wall to connect the mask protective device with the patterned mask, the mask protective device, the patterned mask, and the wall defining a gas-filled enclosure; and

a vent defined by the wall to add a first gas to the enclosure and to remove a second gas from the enclosure, the first gas having a different gas phase composition than the second gas.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mask protective device is attached to the patterned mask with an adhesive.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a gas source connected with the vent to add a first quantity of the first gas to the enclosure through the vent.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the vent includes a first enclosure opening defined by the wall and a second enclosure opening defined by the wall.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the wall has a first side and a second side opposite the first side, and wherein the first enclosure opening is in the first side and the second enclosure opening is in the second side.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a radiation source to generate radiation with a different wavelength than the photolithography radiation to transmit radiation through the enclosure to increase the rate of diffusion of the gas in the enclosure.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a vacuum unit to reduce the total pressure inside the enclosure to below 500 millimeters of mercury.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first gas has a higher transmissivity for the photolithography radiation than the second gas.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the vent has a surface area on the wall that is at least five percent of a total surface area of the wall.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the vent comprises:

an inlet opening defined by the wall to add a first gas to the enclosure; and

an outlet opening defined by the wall to remove a second gas from the enclosure.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising:

a gas source having the first gas at a pressure that is higher than the pressure of the enclosure and connected with the inlet opening to add the first gas to the enclosure through the inlet opening; and

a gas destination having a volume at a pressure that is lower than the pressure of the first gas at the gas source and connected with the outlet opening to remove the second gas from the enclosure through the outlet opening.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the wall has a first side and a second side opposite the first side, and wherein the inlet opening is in the first side of the wall and the outlet opening is in the second side of the wall.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the inlet opening includes a plurality of discrete ports.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the first gas absorbs less of the photolithography radiation than the second gas.

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31. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mask protective device comprises a flexible film.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the mask protective device comprises a flexible film, and wherein the outlet opening is larger than the inlet opening.

33. (New) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the inlet opening includes at least a first port, a second port, and a third port.

34. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a mask protective device including a transparent portion that is transparent to a photolithography radiation, wherein the mask protective device comprises a flexible film attached to a rigid frame;

a patterned mask including a pattern defined at least in part by an opaque portion that is opaque to the photolithography radiation;

a wall to connect the mask protective device with the patterned mask, the mask protective device, the patterned mask, and the wall defining a gas-filled enclosure, the wall having a first side and a second side;

a vent defined by the wall to add a first gas to the enclosure and to remove a second gas from the enclosure, the first gas having a different gas phase composition than the second gas, the first gas having a higher transmissivity for the photolithography radiation than the second gas; and

at least a first enclosure opening of the vent on the first side of the wall, and at least a second enclosure opening of the vent on a second side of the wall.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising at least a first port, a second port, and a third port of said at least the first enclosure opening.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the vent comprises a vent means.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, employed in a photolithography system.